

Case Study Examples

Choose any 5

1. Your client is one of the greatest pop stars in all of history. He not only has the number one selling album in history, but has sold more singles than any other performer. But, things have not been going very well for him lately. There are rumors that he sleeps with young children (particularly boys), he has undergone numerous radical plastic surgeries which have left his face and skin severely disfigured, he is extremely secretive and mysterious, and he has done at least one dangerous act, when he briefly held his baby over a hotel balcony as reporters and fans looked on. He himself had a troubled childhood, the youngest of 6 siblings; he was always a fan favorite and was driven to stardom by a demanding uncompromising father. Now he claims his record company has treated him unfairly, and yet, no one takes him seriously at all. Television news shows are replete with psychologists who say his children should be taken away and he should undergo mental treatment. You are hired as his public relations representative, how can you turn all this around and make sure the perception that other people have of your client is a positive one.
2. The Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) has done everything it can to try to raise test scores. They have re-trained and given bonus' to their teachers, they have equipped them with the latest technology and greater resources that they may need, they have even kept the schools open late and over the summer to help kids that are remedial get extra time and attention to get caught up with the others. And yet, the scores are still among the worst in the nation. It is determined that the Parents are the key lynchpin in all of this. If the parents took as much (or at least more) interest in the academic performance of their students then it is almost guaranteed that the scores will rise. And yet, the parents refuse to help their children. BCPS has hired you to figure out this problem. How can we change the perception in parents; minds about the value and importance of education.
3. The Piscataway-Conoy Indians have a history that stretches back 5,000 years as having been among the first inhabitants of what is now the state of Maryland. Yet, the tribe has consistently failed to receive state recognition, just as recently as this past September, the Governor refused to sign a bill that would recognize the tribe stating "there was not enough evidence linking these people to the Piscataway-Conoy tribe." Of course the members of the tribe are absolutely furious and devastated. The real reason the tribe was not recognized is 2 fold – on the one hand there already exists a Piscataway tribe which claims they are the only true descendents of the Piscataway Indians if the state were to recognize another tribe, it would definitely threaten their power base. In addition, there is the ever present threat that the Indians could receive federal recognition which would pave the way for legalized gambling, a reservation, and possible treaty claims. The Piscataway-Conoy claim that this is not a part of their reasons for recognition at all. They just want the dignity that comes from being a legitimate

- group of people who have the right to be tied to their heritage, history and ancestors. How can the Piscataway-Conoy achieve state recognition?
4. The city of Baltimore is dying. Its reputation for crime, poverty, poor schools and services has created a situation where educated people with money and power who participate in the political process are moving to the suburbs. This has caused an even greater deterioration in the status of the city as both the tax base and political power are hemorrhaging the life out of the city. Simple things such as paving the roads, regular bus and trash collection services, city water or electrical repair and dangerous rat infested building renovation are being ignored, delayed or just put off altogether. However, the city does have a storied history, it has incredible health care and bio-technology services, it has a reputation for creativity, diversity, the burlesque, and has excellent tourism/convention facilities. The city is just wrapping up its "Believe" campaign which only had moderate success at best. The Mayor is depending on you to help establish make this city a success so that he may run for Governor in 2006.
  5. Ethiopia is an incredibly impoverished nation. Countless years of pollution from Europe and climate changes have caused re-occurring famine; in addition AIDS and a string of repressive dictatorships have left the country in ruins. Yet, the Ethiopians themselves have a worldwide reputation for being extremely intelligent, resourceful and kind, beautiful people. The current government has proposed a "School of Engineering" in which for a very modest price, students will get Information Technology training leading up to the "Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer" certificate. The government has both the faculty and facility in place, there is no question as to student enrollment. However, the school needs money to purchase capital equipment (computers, desks, chairs, lights, etc.). How can you deploy a small but dedicated network of Ethiopian expatriates to raise \$100,000 for the school?
  6. The American Red Cross is all about working with blood to save lives. The idea, concept and procedure for blood transfusion were developed by a black man, Dr. Charles Drew. Ironically, blacks are today among the least likely to donate blood in order to help the Red Cross. Some are afraid that they may get AIDS from donating blood, some are afraid they may have AIDS or a similar disease that they will pass on to someone else. Still others feel they have given enough blood through slavery and continued racial exploitations. How can the American Red Cross work with the black community to convince them of the importance of donating blood?
  7. Research indicates and it is indeed a fact that young black men do not wear seatbelts regularly either as passengers or drivers. This is not only extremely dangerous but causes the insurance rates to escalate among all black males. Recently there was an advertisement featuring Baltimore Ravens middle linebacker and future hall-of-famer Ray Lewis in which he is pointing to the corners of a rectangular picture of him saying in quotes "Football is a game, but

- your life is not.” The ad, designed to encourage people to fasten their seatbelts was clever in that it appeared on the back of buses and therefore had Lewis pointing directly into the cars of people who would be reading the ad. However, because Lewis also advertises for ambulance chasing Lawyers, and he has a questionable background himself, the ads were only moderately successful. Design a campaign to get young black men to wear seatbelts on a more regular basis.
8. It is well known by now that Dr. Battle awarded as many as 8 Master’s degrees to students whom the faculty felt should not have received them. Dr. Battle contends that the students should have graduated while the faculty claim that they had not completed the comprehensive exams or the required thesis project. This is a major crisis. If word gets out to the Middle States Association the college or the program could lose its accreditation, which basically means no federal financial aid or aid of any kind from either the state or federal governments. Numerous independent inquires have not been favorable for Dr. Battle. You are his Public Relations representative. With what you have learned or can research about crisis public relations, how would you advise him to handle this situation?
  9. The Eubie Blake Center located in downtown Baltimore, is a unique and powerful non-profit institution which basically functions to help young people get training in the arts (music, dance, drama, singing, painting) which is no longer being offered through the regular schools. Many of Baltimore’s best artists have been trained or were affiliated at one time with the Eubie Blake Center. And yet, the organization has seen its budget cut drastically by both the state and local governments. There is a real chance that this organization will cease to exist soon, thus cutting off completely any exposure of B.C.P.S students to the arts. You are the newest Board Member at the Eubie Blake Center, you were elected due to your expertise in Public Relations, and everyone turns to you for an answer to this problem, what do you say?

Due Wednesday December 17, 2003 3pm.

In each case study, complete answers will include explanation in the following 8 categories:

- I. Situation – also called the “Executive Summary” each of the cases will require your doing a little bit more research, but the question itself contains part of this answer. However, you must go a little further to include the negative, positive, perception and type of research (qualitative or quantitative) you will require. Values statement.
- II. Objectives – state in clear statements what you want to achieve. You should start with minor (achievable) goals and culminate with the overall and most powerful objective. Objectives can be informational or motivational. Tell your client what you will achieve here.
- III. Audience – who is your potential audience? There should be several segments here. Find out in detail about these people, specifically what their concerns are, why they were selected, what do you know about them, and what are some of the considerations when pursuing them.
- IV. Strategy – Now is when you get creative. Strategize according to objectives. Each objective may have several strategies.
- V. Tactics – This is where you earn your money. Each strategy has corresponding tactics which are the specific things you are going to do or organize.
- VI. Calendar/Timetable – Not as relevant in this exercise, but in your formal proposals, each tactic is organized along a calendar.
- VII. Budget – Includes both staff time and out of pocket expenses. For this exercise just include an estimate. \$75/hr.
- VIII. Evaluation – Extremely important, restate the objectives and name your evaluation criteria. Will include news clips, letters, statements, feedback and may require additional research. How will you prove to your client that you fulfilled your objectives?

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3 critical points to consider for full credit:

- 1) A good plan is always value driven. If you are not helping your organization or individual to achieve their values then you are wasting your time. In each example, with each strategy, tactic and audience, you must reflect on and include the things that those entities value and contextualize along those lines. In these case studies you may have to speculate on what the values are, although it would be wise to do some research here on these actual clients, in the outside world it is imperative.
- 2) Good objectives specify a desired outcome for one or several target audiences, and are measurable both in conceptual and practical terms.
- 3) Public Relations professionals determine strategy based on research. In these case studies you can imagine your ideal research results and findings, but in the real world **you must perform the actual research**. You won't mind, because you will be getting paid for performing it.